DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 400 835 IR 056 150

AUTHOR Conway, Vida
TITLE For Better or Worse? School Libraries in the UK: Problems and Developments.
PUB DATE 96
NOTE 11p.; In: Sustaining the Vision. Selected Papers from the Annual Conference of the International Association of School Librarianship (24th, Worcester, England, July 17-21, 1995); see IR 056 149.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Course Integrated Library Instruction; Educational Finance; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Government Role; Improvement; Librarian Attitudes; *Library Administration; Library Collections; *Library Education; Library Personnel; *Library Role; Problems; *School Libraries; Standards; Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS Barriers to Implementation; England; *Teacher Librarians; *United Kingdom; Wales

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the problems and difficulties faced by school libraries in the United Kingdom (UK), specifically England and Wales. These problems are lack of funding, lack of a central role in the curriculum, lack of a central role in the management structure, and inadequate staffing. Lack of library funding stems from overall under-funding of schools and the failure of some schools to see the essential role of the library as a curricular support. In addition, use of the library is not featured much, if at all, in training programs for teachers in the UK, and combined with inadequate library holdings, result in under-used libraries. In the UK, there is no standard qualification or initial training for a teacher-librarian; some teachers are expected to manage the school library in addition to maintaining a full teaching load. The paper also discusses significant publications that have stressed the urgency of improving school libraries and provides suggestions and guidelines for achieving those improvements; the government role in the management of schools, school libraries, and implementation of a National Curriculum; initiatives in library training through National Vocational Qualifications; and examples of recent projects and achievements for school libraries in the UK. (Contains 12 references.) (SWC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 400 835

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

For Better or Worse?
School Libraries in the UK: Problems and Developments

by
Vida Conway
Head of Library Resources
Chaucer Technology School, Canterbury

I could start with the cliche "Which do want first? The good news or the bad news?" But since, if you were to opt for the good news first, I should have to shuffle these papers into a quite different order, I have made the decision for you. It's bad enough,after all, to be sandwiched between Margaret Meek and a Barn Dance -- unable to equal either the intellectual content of the one or the entertainment value of the other.

Perhaps I might indulge in a little reminiscence of school libraries I have known. My own primary school (5 to 11) didn't have such a thing. We had linen backed reading books with geometrical designs on the covers and there were pictures of farm animals -- and of an unreal figure called "Mother," but the text was unmemorable. Still, that was over a half century ago. My secondary school *did* have a library. It was a second floor room of a converted farmhouse and its main attributes were remoteness from the staff room and an outlook on to green lawns and trees. No one below the sixth form was allowed into it (unless you attended Music Club after school, when sixth formers introduced to adoring juniors 78 [rpm] records of "Gigi" and "The Sorcerer's Appren-tice"). During school hours it was reserved for private study, the only books I ever took from its shelves were Lewis & Short, the Latin dictionary that sometimes unlocked the problems of prose translation, and the Harrap dictionary that did the same for French. Although I was a committed reader, and a conscientious student, there was no book that I ever was attracted to take home. I can say with conviction that the dictionaries being too heavy to carry away there would be no thefts from those shelves.

In my first teaching post as a teacher of English in secondary school for two years, I never even found the library -- an interesting indication of how it then seemed irrelevant to what one was doing. I now feel both guilt and horror at that thought and almost didn't confess it to you. But there was one --again a sixth form precinct and at the age of 21 I was not considered experienced enough to be allowed to teach them.

If it seems a little indulgent to dwell on such early recollections, it is at least an indicator that some progress has been made in the intervening years, and I can put before you with more heart the problem and difficulties faced by those who run school libraries in the UK at the present time.

Problems and difficulties abound. They can be summed up simply: lack of funding, lack of central role in the curriculum, lack of central role in management structure and inadequate staffing.

This seems a good moment to point out that, although this talk's subtitle refers to the UK, in the main references are to the situation in England and Wales which have a common system. Only occasionally has it seemed practical to refer to differing conditions in Scotland and northern Ireland, and I apologize at this point to any Scots or Irish listeners for any lack of specific reference to their circumstances.

The provision of libraries in schools is a statutory requirement in Scotland and Northern Ireland, but not in England and Wales. Despite this, practically all schools have a library of some sort; the primary sector sometimes finding it difficult to provide a room for the purpose, and obliged to use an entrance hall or a corridor. Secondary schools almost always have designated space, but if pressed for teaching space are know at times, sometimes on a regular basis, to timetable classes into it. Phrases like "practically all" and "almost always" are unavoidable since there is no comprehensive statistical information on school libraries, comparable with that available for public libraries. What we do have are sample surveys. We also have figures assembled by the Educational Publishers' Association on money spent on all books used in schools in 193, but with no sepa-ration of library spending from textbook spending. Book Trust, a charitable foundation for the promotion of books and reading, produced figures in 1989/90 for what was then considered reasonable expenditure per head on all school books and what would be considered good. They came up with this:

IR056150

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Ken Haycock
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SCHOOL LIBRARIES

EXPENDITURES	RESOURCE ITEMS*	OPENING HOURS*	LIBRARIANS*
Average expenditure for secondary schools per pupil £4.18 Average book price for secondary £9.82	Only 20% of secondary school libraries have 13 items per pupil *Number of items per pupil recommended by Book Trust	58% of middle/primary schools open fewer than 31 hours per week *A library open during lesson time only would be open for about 25 hours per week. One open at lunch and morning break each day would be open 31 hours a week.	UK: 1 for every 8,000 pupils *The Library Association uses the term "librarian" only for professional librarians.
Book Trust recommendation per pupil for books: Secondary: £15.11 Primary: £11.13	29% of school libraries have fewer than 8 items per pupil	35% of secondary schools open fewer than 31 hours per week	Scotland: 1 for every 2,300 pupils
Overall expenditure expected to drop by 5% (secondary) and 8.6% (primary) in current fiscal year.	Average number per pupil: 7.3 primary schools 10.4 secondary schools	7% are open more than 41 hours per week	London: 1 for every 4,900 pupils
50% of secondary school libraries have 5 or more workstations for pupils' use	15% of schools replace total stock every 10 years or less		20% of secondary school libraries run by a teacher with less than 20% of time dedicated to library work

The most recent information about the state of affairs in this country is a set of statistics produced in May of this year by the Library Association, in connection with a publicity week they mounted called *Library Power* which set out to draw attention to the problem. The figures above regarding the number of resource items and expenditures are taken from research conducted between January and April of this year. It covered locations across the UK involving 66,.000 children and looked at the combination of school and public library services available to them in 100 post code areas. Lack of funding of libraries is widespread and serious. Although the Library Association uses the term "librarian" only for professional librarians, this is a good place to say that I have used it throughout this talk for the person in charge of the library and have made the distinction, where necessary, by referring to professional librarians, or teacher librarians.

There is one encourage statistic here, and it computer workstations. I shall be saying more later about IT in the library, but here at least there is encouraging and rapid growth. Five years ago the situation would have been very different. So much for the situation -- now the reasons for it.

Why does this happen, you may ask. Why, if schools think it worthwhile to have a library at all, when they don't have to have one. Do they not fund it more appropriately? It stems firstly form an overall under-funding of schools, so that there is always a host of conflicting worthy causes claiming a share of the precious pot of gold, some of them so obviously essential -- set texts for examinations, paper to write on, basic materials for art or technology--that the library's needs are sidelined.

This sidelining can only happen because of the second reason for underfunding -- the total failure in some schools to see the essential role of the library as a curricular support, some would say as a curricular basis. A key figure in establishing the image of the library is the head teacher, who, although she or he does not usually nowadays make autocratic decisions, will be a major influence. In all schools where the library is excellent it has the unqualified support of the head teacher, whose vision it has been to equip and staff it properly.

You would think that teachers would clamor for a cross-subject resource, funded to provide attractive, exciting materials of a kind that cannot be bought in sets for class use. The reason that they do not do so more vociferously is that the provision of a library was no part of their own school lives (One wonders, in some cases, if it was a part of their university lives either.) and they fail to see its potential. If you add to that the fact that resource-based learning was much I vogue in the sixties, now castigated as the age of permissiveness and low standards, you begin to see historical reasons for libraries not always being demanded as essentials by teaching staff.

Furthermore, use of the library has not featured much, it at all, in the training programs for teachers in this country, so that younger members of the profession still come into schools not seeing it as a natural source of materials and an obvious place to take their classes or have recourse to themselves.

These comments about teachers' and headteachers' attitudes need qualification. There are exceptions to all generalizations, and it is only possible for me today to paint with a broad brush in this address. Most primary school heads and staff have recognized the value of a library; for them the constraints are budgetary only. Their method of working with children requires the use of a range of resources. It is the subject specialism of secondary school, and of our higher education system, that produces teachers with a high level of knowledge and real enthusiasm for a specific subject area -- and *sometimes the* accompanying assumption that narrowness is necessary to achieve excellence.

The final nail in the coffin of the under-used library is , of course, its stock. If that is inadequate, if now in the 1990s it is entirely book based, does not offer a wide choice, a range of periodicals, and non-book items, if its fiction is not as well packaged and presented as the station book stall, then it is doomed. If there is an IT department elsewhere in the school, still keeping hold of the CD Roms and the word processors, there is truly little hope for the library.

Having hammered home the "final nail," it is now timely to talk about the staffing of our school libraries. I *qualify* the inclusion of staffing in the handicaps, since it is common, whatever their difficulties, to find dedicated, enthusiastic people with a vision of what a good school library should be -- even if they lack the resources to provide it.

In this country there is no standard qualification or initial training for a teacher-librarian. Some School libraries are managed by professional librarians who have library skills but are rarely equipped with a teaching qualification as well. Schools that appoint them, even if on a term-time only basis are usually pleased and surprised at the way in which library use develops. Schools that appoint a full-time librarian, have already made a commitment to the value of their library. The vast majority of school libraries, however, are managed by teachers, many of whom have no knowledge of library organization when they take on the job, though many of them find some form of INSET, however brief, and most of whom are expected to run the library in addition to having a full, or almost full, teaching timetable. Can a more impossible task be imagined? You are in charge of a facility that should be available to pupils throughout the school day, yet you are only able to be there during morning break, in the lunch hour and after school? On top of that you have full responsibility for teaching a subject, and all that that involves -- preparation of material, marking, recording achievement, attending meetings, and so on. Some teacher-librarians have an allocation of hours for the library, but as you have seen, it is not usually a large one. As a teacher-librarian in a large secondary school of 1200 pupils, I was unusually blessed by being allocated never less than 50% of my time to manage the library. I never met another teacher-librarian with as generous an allocation. The result of my having this time meant that the library developed and improved, the staff began to understand its role in the school, and whole-heartedly approved when I was finally appointed to be there on a full-time basis with a clerical assistant as well. In some cases, teacher-librarians with a full teaching load, have the support of part of full-time clerical or technical assistance, sometimes the voluntary support of parents. The level of their expertise in library matters will vary, most of it up to now being learned on the job.

There are opportunities for teachers to acquire a qualification in librarianship by several routes, though too few are able to take advantage of them. The reasons may be a lack of available funding -- you can't take a year out of your job without funding for your replacement, not to mention the costs of your course. Those with family commitments may not easily be able to change their residence. And there is no financial or promotional incentive, no career ladder within the world of school libraries. Professional librarians must move out of schools if they seed career development, and teachers must usually seek it along the paths of pastoral or subject work.

A hopeful development in recent years has been the introduction of distance learning courses, pioneered by the University of Wales in Aberystwyth, which offers both a Master's and a Bachelor's degree in Library and Information Studies.

But most teacher-librarians are obliged to rely on short training courses, like the SLA weekend training course, along with its training days up and down the country, and opportunities offered by school library services, or institutes of further education.

A word at this point about school library services. Until recently they have been a local authority provision, free of charge to schools, offering a range of services -- boxed project loans on more or less any subject requested by a school, a range of up to date fiction and non-fiction to boost the school's own stock, access to non-book materials, assisted purchase schemes, book-processing and cataloging services, and the support o professional library staff who would visit teacher-run libraries on a regular basis, offering advice and practical help. Primary schools have always relied particularly heavily on them for changing up-to -date book stock for project work in the classroom.

As a result of recent legislation, about which I have more to say shortly, school library services have ceased to be a free provision to schools. As part of a policy of giving schools more control over their finances, most of the money that was spent on them has been delegated to schools, subsumed, in other words, into school budgets, without being earmarked "for the library." School library services have become, like privatized business, responsible for their own financial survival, the argument being that, if they provide a service that is valuable to schools, schools will buy it. What has happened is that some school library services are thriving and are well supported by their schools, others have ceased to exist, and in many areas teachers and pupils are leaning heavily on the public library service, itself facing cutbacks, to supply their needs. The changes in how school library services are managed has sharpened the disparity of provision for children in this country.

Well, it is a gloomy scene, isn't it? And describing it has perhaps had at least the effect for some of you of making you feel that things aren't as bad in your own situation as you thought. Gloomy it may be, but it is not static. It would probably be true to say that no libraries now are quite as bad as that one I began by describing, so gradually there is change -- but change that is more of a drip process than a torrent.

I would like to move on now to the "good news" -- the heartening developments that have taken place over the past few years, that have visibly turned round a number of libraries which I now about and which have at any rate made some impact on the inadequacies of others.

It is worth mentioning in the first place a few of the many significant publications that have stressed the urgency of improvement in our school libraries.

Better Libraries: Good Practice in Schools was produced by Her Majesty's Inspectorate in 1989. Rather than lament the inadequacies they had seen, the inspectors set about describing examples of good practice observed during visits to schools between 1986 and 1989. The style is simple and direct, the tone friendly -- it's a collection of good ideas, many of which can be put into practice inexpensively with immediate improvement. Most significantly of all, a copy was sent to the headteacher of every school. This is the sort of thing it was saying:

> "The better school libraries advertise themselves successfully. They sign-post the location of the library at the entrance of the school and in corridors. They regularly have changing displays about the library at key points in the school They circulate broadsheets containing library news and review, sometimes written by pupils."

Simple, encouraging, non-threatening. Obvious, I can imagine some of you thinking. Yes, but even really well-run libraries would find something there that they had not thought of doing, or might approach in a new way.

This was followed in 1992 by *Books in Schools*, the Book Trust publication previously referred to. Its opening chapter states unceremoniously, "Rarely have so many pupils had so few books," and it made these specific recommendations for school libraries:

The School Librarian should:

* form an integral part of senior management and curriculum planning structures
* be a full-time appointment throughout the calendar year
* have head of department status within the school
* be directly responsible to the headteacher
* be supported by a library resources committee
* attend all head of department meetings and resource committees
* be actively involved in departmental internal planning
* have opportunities to develop informal relationships with teaching colleagues

A copy of this, too, was sent to all schools.

In the same year, the Library Association published *Learning Resources in Schools*, a comprehensive set of guidelines for establishing an effective school library, covering issues such as management and staffing structures, accommodation, learning skills, and the role of the School Library Service. It was the first publication to give detailed advice on how to develop a financial plan by assessing current stock, and following formulae for an annual maintenance budget and an annual development budget.

CALCULATING THE COST	
Annual Maintenance Budget	Annual Developmental Budget
No. Of items to be replaced annually (10% minimum) X Average price per item	No. Of **additional** items needed to reduce shortfall X Average price per item

This was of enormous value to school librarians, since it gave them a clear framework on which to cost the inadequacy of their library funding, and to demonstrate to the school management what was needed. But since this publication ad to be bought, and was not inexpensive, those who needed it most may well never have seen it.

Most recent of all has been a report produced this year for the Department of National Heritage (which includes libraries) by a working party of the *Library and Information Services Council* on library services for children and young people. Entitled *Investing in Children*, it examines the whole field of provision and makes valuable comment on what sort of relationship there should be between public libraries, school library services and school libraries.

These are by no means the only useful and interesting publications of the past six years, but are the ones most relevant to the school librarian on the job. They were timely indeed. All the talk in schools was of policies and development plans, part of the growing pressure from government to make schools more accountable, more effective, and to give value for money. They provided useful ammunition for librarians in schools where there was a need for improvement. Librarians who not only proposed that staff should discuss as a whole a policy for the library within the school, but who also came armed with a development plan and an assessment of expenditure for a three to five year period, tended to be noticed. These were not quiet little people who stamped labels in books.

It has been government policy throughout the 1990s to extend the market economy into the

public sector. Within schools, and thus within school libraries, this has led to the following broad developments:

1. A move towards "customer" orientation. (No work has increased in general use so much as the word "customer.")
2. A demand that value for money be demonstrated.
3. Competition between schools for pupils.

A government bent on increasing parental choice and parental power began by handing to school governors more power than they had ever held before, including the power to appoint (and dismiss) staff without intervention from the LEA, and the power to distribute the school's budget. So the library might get more than moral support from the governors--it might receive had cash. But it would only be likely to do that if the librarian adopted marketing strategies --demonstrated the need for the product, demonstrated that it was good value for money, generated customer demand.

This new budgetary feature of the Act was known as Local Financial Management, or LM whereby, apart from a small proportion retained by the LEWA to provide items such as transport and school meals, the governors had control of the budget and could make decisions as to how much of it went on staffing, how much on books, how much on furniture, and son on. In the days of LEA control, the budget was compartmentalized and sums were allocated to buildings, books, staff... So, for the first time schools were free to appoint a librarian without losing, say, a technician from the science laboratories. They could decide to refurbish the library and manage without new chairs in some of the classrooms. Overall this organizational change has benefitted school libraries -- many of them have had a face-lift and acquired staffing for the first time as a result of LM.

The reference to schools becoming more competitive, where they used to work cooperatively, has stemmed from replacing the old notion of "catchment area" with an emphasis on parental choice. The upshot has been that schools have been more anxious than ever before that their image be a good one. They would like to be chosen. Visiting parents must like what they see -- and although it may be for all the wrong reasons, libraries have often benefitted, since libraries can be something of a showplace in the school. As long as the improvements to the library are of the right kind, and as long as it becomes more used by pupils as a result, librarians have not objected. Good librarians have seized upon the scope for implementing change. They have requested, and sometimes been granted, a place in the line management structure of the school, a link with the governing body in having a governor with specific interest in the library, and have set about looking at ways I which investment in the library could be evaluated. Governors can be particularly helpful. They are outsiders, people from business and industry quite unaccustomed to the sort of penny-pinching accepted in schools as a matter of course, and valiant campaigners for resources in schools to be improved.

Curricular change has been the really significant thing. Teachers in England feel as if curricular change has been non-stop since the early 1980s. A new examination at 16, GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) and an initiative (TVEI) to make the curriculum for 14-16 year olds more vocational and more autonomous, both brought significant changes. A large element of course-work in place of traditional examinations, and the requirement in a range of subjects that young people show evidence of individual research, transfused fresh blood into our secondary school libraries. Librarians at las had real hard evidence of the need for their stock to be updated -- and teachers were agreeing with them.

1988 saw the introduction of a National Curriculum, setting out for the first time attainment targets for the four key stages of learning from 5 to 16, suggesting programs of study to enable them to be reached, and demanding standardized tests at 7, 11, and 14 to check on the level of achievement. This is not the place to enlarge upon the controversy and debate there has been over this new curriculum and the original model which went against the advice of professionals in education has been modified. What emerged does stipulate that young people need to acquire certain information skills, they need to learn how to use reference books, how to interrogate text, and so the aims of school librarians have been supported. In specifying what possible areas may be chosen for work in history, geography, literature and science, for example, it has limited the range of materials a school library might be expected to provide, and thus enabled librarians to plan more effectively with a limited budget.

Not only are schools to have a centrally established curriculum, their pupils to be regularly tested and the results to be published, they are also to undergo regular inspection at four yearly intervals. The group of professional educators, formerly known as Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI), was diminished and a new privatized body containing about a third of the former HMI, but including a proportion of lay inspectors, was put together and renamed Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). These school inspections are thorough -- they cover not just the quality of teaching and learning, but the management of schools, their accommodation and resources, and whether they are giving *value for money*. Schools are provided with a *Framework for the Inspection of Schools* which tells them clearly what they should expect form an inspection. There are elements that clearly relate to the library.

A written report is produced after a school has been inspected, and copies must be made available to any members of the public who wish to see them. Amazingly --and amusingly-- the promise or thereat of inspection has had a considerable effect on schools. Many have called in professionals for a "pre-inspection," a sort of dummy run so that hey can put their house in order before the real thing befalls them,with the dreaded possibility of bad publicity. Any many of them have realized that their libraries will not stand up to scrutiny. I now of one school -- and feel sure it will not be the only one -- that appointed a professional librarian to sort out its library as a direct result of the "pre-inspection" advice.

We await publication in Autumn of this year of something provisionally entitled *100 School Libraries*, a survey by members of the inspectorate that has entailed visits to primary, secondary and special schools all over England. An article about this work in a recent edition of *Literacy Today* by HIM Stewart Robertson suggests that successful libraries contribute to the "value-added" element of education. I quote from the article:

> Most critical, however, is the presence of an adult who is sufficiently knowledgeable about books and reading and well-informed about the needs and interests of children and young people to "match" particular resources and individual pupils. The dynamic between pupils and such a teacher, librarian or ancillary is often instrumental in encouraging the first and subsequent steps in reading for pleasure. Its positive effects in terms of literacy are incalculable.

I would like this to be printed out in huge fluorescent letters and posted to the Secretary of State for Education and to every headteacher and every school governor in the land.

The word library has been used extensively so far with the assumption but no great emphasis on its being essentially a multi-media center. Where librarians have shown themselves to be interested and possibly well-versed in IT developments in particular, the library has taken off as a focus of interest in the school. Since Margaret Kinnell is to speak later in the week on the subject of technology, I do not propose to deal with it in detail, but it is worth saying that what seemed two years ago t be invaluable assets to secondary school pupils were a considerable number of networked computers in the library for their use with word processing packages, a spread sheet, an encyclopedia, a world atlas at their disposal. Since then there have, I know, been developments in interactive materials and much talk of the Internet. Where school libraries have computerized their issue systems, there have been great gains in accessibility of the catalog, particularly if it is networked throughout the school in the speed with which items can be traced and the general efficiency of issue and recall of materials. All these features contribute towards the greater professionalism of the school library.

A good deal of what I have said has indicated the importance of the school librarian in creating a profile for the library. Undoubtedly the personality and the energy are as important as the training since young people need more than a well organized collection resources; they need, as Stewart Robertson has said, the kind of inspiration that an enthusiastic, dynamic approach to its use can give. Acknowledgement must be accorded those who work in less than ideal conditions, but how achieve so much --whatever their background or skills. The realization of whole school policies and development plans for the library are usually attributable in large part to the tact, infectious enthusiasm, and sheer hard work of the librarian.

I spoke earlier of the limited opportunities for training in librarianship open to teachers. A new initiative holds promise of a scheme that would enable them, or clerical assistants, or parent

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

volunteers to acquire skills and a recognized qualification without needing secondment. National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) are on the way in, and are newly available in library and information studies. Some of their key features are that they are modular in structure, may be taken in any order and at any pace, and are assessed on a practical rather than a theoretical basis.

I fear that too much of this talk has been of the struggle, too little of the achievements. That is because one cannot hide or deny the statistics; one cannot conceal that there is much hard campaigning to be done still, but I would like to finish on a more upbeat note, by indicating to you some of the positive developments in the field and some of the initiatives being undertaken by librarians in our schools.

There have recently been an increasing number of advertisements in the *Library Record*, the journal of the Library Association, for professional librarians in primary schools, and Buckinghamshire County Library Service has cooperated in the making of a video which features three professional librarians working in five primary schools, demonstrating the contribution that such an appointment can make to the improved management of resources, support for topic work across the curriculum, the development of information skills and the use of information technology. This is a natural follow-up to a scheme in which the local school library service worked in partnership with primary schools "to identify and demonstrate the particular contribution that the library can make to the curriculum of the primary school." To justify the financial outlay on the scheme it was felt necessary to attempt some measurement of its educational effectiveness. This was done by careful record-keeping of , for example, the librarians' activities, class use of the library, information skills materials that had been prepared, library -related work done by the children, and so on. Certainly, following a similar venture in secondary schools, the number of professional librarians employed in that authority's schools rose from none to fifteen over a five year period.

An independent secondary school in the Midlands has recently built a new library on the site of an old tennis court with an upper floor designed for private study and a ground floor for more relaxed and informal area. Since this library opened in September 1994, three out of every five of the school's pupils visit it every day, and four full-time and two part-time members of the staff keep it open for 80 hours a week.

A secondary school librarian has lead a scheme whereby her school library has been used as a basis for extending opportunities for gifted children from two to its feeder primary schools,which then led to work of a similar kind with gifted children from the secondary school. The librarian comments, "The pupils involved in the pilot scheme probably think that they only learned some extra facts about the subjects they were studying. I am sure they have gained insight into research and information skills which will stand them in good stead ... And which has set them well on the way to becoming independent learners."

Another enterprising librarian used the annual Carnegie Medal award for fiction to set up a reading project with 14 to 15 year-olds. She has had to work with only a very limited number of copies since hardback fiction titles eat fast into library budgets, but judicious use of a photocopier has helped pupils get a flavor of which books they would like to concentrate on. The librarian's comment on the whole venture, pursued in slightly differing forms over several years is, "Our conclusions as to the value of the project are very positive. All the books have been in continuous circulation since the new school year began; the children still talk about the project; and the image of reading has been enhanced within a group of fairly reluctant readers, and by a subtle knock-on effect, will beyond it. What more could we ask?"

In my own library, stimulated by a request to take part in an action research project which led to the publication of *School Libraries in Action*, we examined in some detail how the library was used by Year 7 and Year 9 pupils work for art. The department had always relied heavily on library materials for stimulus for the pupils, and it was both interesting and informative to look closely at how children set about deciding how to find what they needed, what problems they encountered in searching for it, how far a lack of materials posed a problem, and what steps we needed to take to give them better opportunities which was not simply a matter of increasing the stock but involved better cooperation with subject teachers, better instruction in information skills, and an adequate key-work feature in the recently computerized catalog.

An enterprising publisher, Pan/Macmillan, has for some years run a biennial competition for 9 to 13 year-olds with a substantial book award for the winning school. The prize goes to the school that demonstrates in whatever form it chooses, the best use of its library. The winners are always

heartening examples of good practice and enthusiasm on the part of both pupils and library staff in the chosen schools and the runners-up.

In addition, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, a charitable foundation supporting education, arts, and publishing projects, with assistance of the SLA, has administered award schemes in both secondary and primary schools. The mst recent has selected thirty schools to benefit from an advisory visit by an expert in school library development, to receive financial support in the form of a challenge grant (For every £1 contributed by the school, the Foundation contributes £10.) and a follow-up visit after six months to view and discuss progress. So there is both a boost to the stock and a careful look at the way it is promoted and used. Both of these schemes have proved supportive and a real asset to the fortunate libraries that have won the range of awards.

The drip effect I referred to earlier is gathering speed -- though not yet a torrent, we begin to see a few puddles forming.

Without intervention at a high level, a real taking to heart of the wise recommendations of *Investing in Children*, and a willingness to fund them nationally, we shall not see a revolution in our school library provision by the millennium. The disparities between one area and another, and one school and another will remain, even if, overall, there is a gradual crawling forward. We come back to *Library Power*.

What Children Should Be Getting

* 13 resource items per pupil in secondary schools

* professional librarian in every school

* 10% of stock replacement per year in secondary schools

* school library open and staffed through and beyond the school day

* at least 5 computer workstations in library for children's use

* ALL schools should buy back into delegated School Library Services

Our school libraries have their due quota of visionaries. The vision is often obstructed by lack of materials, lack of time, of space, of support, but it is there. I hope I have enabled you to see that, and to appreciate that in the UK if you have the vision, you have to be prepared to go with the fight.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Better Libraries: Good Practice in Schools. A Survey by H. M. Inspectorate. Department of Education & Science, 1989.

Books in Schools. BNB Research Fund Report 60. Book Trust, 1992

Framework for the Inspection of Schools, revised. OFSTED, 1994.

Herzog, Julia. "The Development of NVQs/SVQs," *The School Librarian*, vol. 43, no. 2.

Information and Library Services Lead Body. *ILS S/NVQ Essentials*. The Library Association, n.d.

Kinnell, Margaret, ed. *Learning Resources in Schools: Library Association Guidelines for School Libraries*. The Library Association, 1992.

Kinnell, Margaret, ed. *Managing Library Resources in Schools*. Library Association, 1994.

Kinnell, Margaret, ed. *School Libraries in Action*. British Library R& D Report 6130. Taylor Graham, 1994.

Library and Information Services Council (England). *Investing in Children: The Future of Library Services for Children and Young People: A Report by the Working Party on Library Services for Children and Young People*. Department of National Heritage, 1995.

Library Power Publicity Handout. Library Association, n.d.

Ryan, Mike. "Light Shining in Buckinghamshire," *The School Librarian*, vol. 43, no 2.

Stevens, Lynn. "To Each According to His (or Her) Needs: Working with Able Children," *The School Librarian*, vol. 43, no. 1.